

THE
BLACK BOX
BROKE OPEN
THE
Roguary's Discovered

AND
ROBIN will be hang'd at last.

IN A
LETTER
FROM

P. — T. Esq; to his Friend in the Country.

Socij Dolosi Periculosi.

L O N D O N.

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The Black Box broke open, the Reguery's discovered, &c.

Honoured Sir,

YOURS of the 19th instant I receiv'd, wherein you were pleased to desire me to send you the best account I could of the *Black Box*; and in compliance thereto I have herewith sent you the following relation: Which is briefly this.

A Nobleman of a certain Country having been treacherous to his Prince, (a crime of which our age has been too fatally fruitful) and finding himself obnoxious to the stroke of offended Justice, his treasonable practices being brought to light, consults with one of his servants, who was call'd *Robbin*, how to escape the punishment that was due to his crimes; which he does by persuading him to make himself the principal and indeed the only conspirator, and to clear his Lord from having any hand at all therein.

To encourage him to this, the Nobleman tells him, that although perhaps he might be cast, and condemned likewise, yet he would not fail to procure him a pardon, which should secure his life; and also allow him (as a recompence for his service and faithfulness to him), a great part of his estate.

Upon this, the Nobleman's Steward confesses himself to be the sole author and contriver of the treason that was detected, and absolutely clears his Lord from having any hand in it, or knowledge of it; for which, Sentence of death was awarded against him, and he remanded back to prison; where his Lord comes to him, upon pretence of getting him to make farther discovery of the treasons for which he stood condemned; but indeed, to tell him that he had procured his pardon; (shewing him one that he had counterfeited for that purpose, which he took out of a *Black-box*) and told him that notwithstanding the pardon he had procured, it was the King's pleasure that he should be carried to the place of execution, for the greater terror and example of others, and after having made his speech there, should then receive his pardon; bidding him not to be daunted or troubled at any thing that should be either done, or said to him in the mean time; and told him wixhat, that when at the place of execution he should see a person on his right hand holding up a black Box, it should be an infallible sign to him, of his pardon being there: upon this, the man was greatly encourag'd, and seem'd not to be concerned with his present condition, but long'd for, (as much as others in such cases use to fear) the day of his supposed execu-

tion; which being come, the man with the black Box was very careful to appear in his sight, as soon as he was come out of the prison, in order to be drawn to the place of execution, the bearer of the black Box took great care to place himself upon an eminence on the right hand of the prisoner, that he might be more conspicuous to him: the prisoner then addresses himself in a speech (which he thought not to be his last) to the people, and tells them of the great sorrow and contrition he had for the crime for which he was to suffer; and as at his tryal, so now again acquits his Lord from having any hand in it, or knowledge of it, still having his eye for the most part upon the black Box; but having drawn out his speech to an unusual length, the chief Officer attending the execution, told him he could stay for him no longer; to which the prisoner replied, that there was a Gentleman stood close by with a black box in his hand, who was lately come from court, and who he was confident had got his pardon. Straightway the Gentleman with the black box was called for who being come, delivered his box to the chief Officer, who took a paper out of it containing these words, *Upon sight hereof, Let the prisoner be immediately executed;* which order was so speedily obey'd, that the prisoner had no time, to discover the cheat, that was put upon him; but as he liv'd like a knave, so he died like a fool; and only added this to his speech, *Robin will be hang'd at last.* And this is the substance, of what I heard related concerning the black Box.

No less tragical (though more certain) was the story we find recorded in Baker's Chronicle, p. 305. of a Miller that had been a busy actor in the Cornish Rebellion in King Edward the sixth's time; who hearing of the approach of Sir William Kingston the Privy Seal, wisely withdrew himself out of the reach of danger, but charged his man, that if any one should enquire after the Miller, he should not speak of him, but say that himself was the miller, and had been so for three years before. Sometime afterwards the Provost came and called for the Miller, when our comers the miller's servant, told the Provost he was the miller; the Provost demanded of him how long he had been miller? the man replied these three years. Upon which the Provost (judging him to be the man he look'd for,) commanded his men to lay hold on him, and hang him on the next tree. At this the fellow (who expected not to be so treated,) cried out, he was none of the miller, but the miller's man: Nay, said the Provost, I'll take you at your first word: for if thou art the miller, then thou art a busy knave, and if thou art not the miller, then thou art a false lying knave; and howsoever, thou canst never

do thy master better service than to hang for him. And so the poor fellow was hang'd without any more ado.

About the same time, and on the same occasion, did the Provost Marshal Sir William Kingston use the Mayor of Bodin having been amongst the Rebels (though constrain'd, as saith my Author) the Provost sent him word he would come and dine with him: For whose coming the Mayor made great provision; a little before dinner, the Provost took the Mayor aside, and whispered him in the ear, that an execution must that day be done in the town, and therefore required to have a pair of Gallows set up accordingly. Presently after Dinner, the Provost taking the Mayor by the Hand, entreated him to lead him to the Place where the Gallows was; which when the Provost beheld, he asked the Mayor if he thought them to be strong enough: Yes, said the Mayor, doubtless they are; well then, said the Provost, get you up speedily, for they are provided for you. I hope, said the Mayor, you mean not as you say; in good faith said the Provost but I do; and so caused him to be hanged immediately; which more resembled cruelty, than Justice. but in times of rebellion (such as this was) when all the boundaries of law and right are broke down, and the King's prerogatives and People's Liberties are equally invaded, that martial way of executing offenders, which their offences have made necessary, must be born withal.

But to conclude, let us so take care in all our actions to be found faithful to God, and loyal to the King, that we need not to stand in expectation of a black box, nor be in fear of meeting with that deserved punishment which is justly due to all those who shall be found to be traitors to their King and Country. And therefore let us pray with the Church.

From all seditions, rebellions, and privy Conspiracies, Good Lord deliver us.

Your Friend

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